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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP
INTELLIGENCE REPORT

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COUNTRY Yugoslavia

DATE:

SUBJECT Slovene Communist Policy toward the
Roman Catholic Church
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INFO.

DIST. December 1947

PAGES 5

SUPPLEMENT

ORIGIN

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[illegible]

2. Following the instructions received from the Central Committee of Communist Party of Yugoslavia, the Central Committee of Communist Party of Slovenia issued, on 7 August 1947, a directive to all Secretaries of District Committees of KPS, instructing them to prepare for a decisive attack against the Church - the last remaining center of reactionary opposition left in the country.
2. On 18 August, Edvard Kardelj made a public speech in Ljubljana in which he made an extremely virulent attack against the Church. This speech was the signal for widespread anti-clerical demonstrations throughout Slovenia.
Comment: Similar demonstrations have taken place in Croatia.)
3. There follows a literal translation:

ZK of KPS

7 August 1947

ZK of KPS P32/47 - C

To all Secretaries of District Committees of IPS

As a result of decisions made by the Politburo of the Party, the following confidential instructions will be carried out by all local committees of the Party.

- (a) The Politburo has examined and studied a great number of political reports and has reached the conclusion that the greatest center of all reactionary sentiments and activities in Slovenia is the Catholic Church and the priests that serve it. The Catholic Church, by the very nature of its fundamental tenets, is, and will always remain, ideologically opposed to the ideals of the Party. The great Lenin recognized in religion a major barrier in the enlightenment of the masses and more particularly of the peasants. Facts prove this. In spite of our victories over the Church, and in spite of the sentences pronounced against leading members of the Church, a great portion of the population still remains under the cloud of religious

Document No. 011

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DDA Memo, 4 Apr 77 25X1

Auth: DDA REG. 77/1763

Date: 24 APR 1978 By

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influence and faithful to the Church. Even in the towns we have noticed that a great number of workers still allow themselves to be deluded by the Church - a fact which ill accords with the progressive aims of the Party.

- (b) Open and obvious manifestations of clerical opposition - such as the coalition of the reactionary bourgeoisie and the priests, grain hoarding, Krizari activities, et cetera - all go to show that the time has now come when it is absolutely necessary to declare war against the Church and remove once and for all the evil influence of the priests in our country.
- (c) In this war we shall adopt the well proven tactics recommended by the Bible, "I shall slaughter the shepherd, and the flock will disperse". If we wish to attack the root of the evil then we must compromise and neutralize the shepherds - that is, the priests. For this reason it is necessary for you to organize, through your local trusted agents, energetic action against the priests. Every shred of evidence should be sought which can, in some way or other, serve to compromise the individual representatives of the Church before the masses. As evidence accumulates and rumors rather way, hold public meetings and place the facts before the masses. Form among trusted party members organize groups who will publicly demand the removal of individual priests. Exploit every opportunity for organizing demonstrations against the Church and more particularly against the various religious orders. During the demonstrations demands should be made for handing over the Church representatives to the authorities. These demands should be accompanied by public and vociferous expressions of hatred against the Church. The primary object of these demonstrations is to provide the authorities with an opportunity to take effective action against individual priests, monks and nuns. All those who during the demonstrations evidence their sympathies for the Church, should be provoked into incidents - thus giving the authorities an opportunity to arrest them. It is absolutely necessary that all demonstrations should appear spontaneous and as though provoked by the peoples' own will.
- (d) High reference to monasteries and convents. It is demanded that all monks and nuns be evacuated from monasteries and convents so that these buildings can be given to the people and so that these monks and nuns may be productively employed in a lay capacity. The fight should more particularly be directed against pilgrimage shrines and pilgrims. These pilgrimage shrines are nothing more or less than money making institutes for exploiting the credulity of the masses and setting their hearts against the peoples' government. As rest houses for pilgrims are used for criminal practices, the duty of all organizations of the Party is to send their most trusted members to these pilgrimage shrines with instructions to provoke the pilgrims, through appropriate

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leaflets, slogans, et cetera, to agitate against the Government. Everything should be done to give the impression that these anti-Government outbursts genuinely emanate from the pilgrims and better still from the priests. In the meantime the local UDV and Militia will be prepared to effect the arrests of such priests and pilgrims as may be indicated to them by the local party representatives. Those arrested will be charged with inciting sedition against the State. Further, these arrests will provide the authorities with an excuse for searching pilgrimage shrines, monasteries, convents, et cetera, preparatory to finally closing them down. In connection with all these actions all cells and Party organizations will furnish us with full reports through their appropriate District Committees.

- (c) It is necessary to create an atmosphere which will permit the struggle against the Church to grow successively sharper and more bitter. Our first duty is to rid the people of the cancer of religion. We must, in Slovenia, suppress all the old and new influences of the Church. The Slovene people must be thoroughly exercised of all the evil influences of the priests and religion, for only this will enable us to master the peasants and in a broader sense, the masses. In particular we must fight against the influence of religion among the Youth. All organizations must ensure that no school children receive religion instruction. This duty will fall principally upon the organizations of the AFZ. (Antifasistički Front Zona - Women's Anti-Fascist Front). The youth must, according to a well conceived and long-range plan, be drawn further away from the Church, in the manner so successfully carried out in the Soviet Union.
- (f) For these reasons particular care should be given to supervising the education of members of "Pioneers" and SKOJ. Through careful instruction youths must be persuaded that any religious instruction they had received in the past was not only false and wrong but also calculated to prejudice their chances of enjoying the full benefits of a new and progressive education - the only education which will fit them out to become progressive and free citizens. Where children still remain under the religious influence of their parents, every effort must be made to destroy that influence. If parents insist on visiting their religious prejudices upon their children, then appropriate counter measures will be taken to silence them and force them to respect the law of religious toleration. Particularly obstinate parents will be "compromised" and brought to the notice of the authorities.

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- (g) Call a meeting of all local organizations in your district and discuss with them the best ways of implementing these instructions in the light of local circumstances and possibilities. Do not mention this circular at your meetings. Send us a full and detailed report of your local meetings and the ways in which you propose to execute our instructions. regard this struggle as the most important struggle for the present.
- (h) On the 19th of this month (August) a mass meeting will be held at Labor in Ljubljana. The speakers will include our leader, Kardelj. Organize collective listening groups around your loudspeakers. Kardelj's speech will be the signal for beginning the battle.

With Tito in the execution of the Plan.

J.P.

S.E.

Piha Lavinko
General Secretary

Stane Gavcin
Organization Secretary

4. On 19 August, Kardelj made his famous speech (fully published in the press) in Ljubljana. Immediately after the speech a series of anti-clerical demonstrations and measures began, some of which follow:

- (a) A large crowd surged round the palace of the Bishop of Ljubljana, and with cries of "Draw Volk (the Bishop) out of his lair and draw the skin off his body" entered the palace and indulged in an orgy of vandalism and looting. Fortunately for the Bishop, he was away in the country.
- (b) Similar demonstrations took place outside the Franciscan Monastery in Ljubljana.
- (c) In many parts of Slovenia, churches and church property were attacked, and many priests were arrested on the grounds that they had provoked breaches of public order.
- (d) At pilgrim shrines and religious festivals agents provocateurs distributed "black propaganda" and a further number of priests and pilgrims were arrested. The most important pilgrim shrine in Slovenia, at Devica Marijana, Trozjan, was first looted and then closed by the police. Another very old and famous pilgrim shrine on the Island of Blejsko Jezero was looted, closed, and is now guarded by plain clothes PDV personnel.

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- (e) The AFZ has already begun an intensive campaign against religious instruction for all children.
- (f) A number of monasteries and convents have already been dissolved. Old monks and nuns have been assigned to specific private houses, and young ones have been ordered to take up productive work.

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